

**Testimony for the Appropriations Committee
Funding for the Connecticut Mental Health Center
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Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Committee, I am writing on behalf of funding for the Connecticut Mental Health Center.

I am writing testimony for the Appropriations Committee IN SUPPORT OF FUNDING for the Connecticut Mental Health Center.

I am one of the chief residents on the Clinical Neuroscience Research Unit (CNRU) at Connecticut Mental Health Center (CMHC). Our unit is a long-running collaboration between Yale University and CMHC. On our unit, we primarily run clinical trials. Almost all of these trials are funded by federal sources, while much of the unit is state-supported. By funding our unit the State of Connecticut effectively leverages federal funds, **for every \$1 that goes to CMHC in state funding, we bring in more than \$8 of external grant funding** (mostly federal). This money pays for nurses, doctors, and scientists involved in running the research. It also pays for the reimbursement patients receive for participating in the research. These patients are often poor and the reimbursement they receive means a lot to them financially, some of them are homeless and would likely roam the streets of New Haven otherwise. All this extra out-of-state money flowing in not only infuses cash into the Connecticut economy but also contributes to the leading role that New Haven plays in mental health research in the United States and the world. The proposed substantial cut in CMHC funding would likely lead to less trials being run and therefore less external/federal money flowing in. **Every dollar that is cut would likely lead to the loss of multiple dollars in economic activity in Connecticut.**

Aside from completing important research the CNRU, and CMHC in general, plays a vital role in training future leaders in psychiatry. Without the training opportunities that CMHC provides, public psychiatry in all of Connecticut would suffer because a substantial number of doctors who train there remain in public psychiatry – working for the state or community health centers in Connecticut. Given the already short supply of psychiatrists in public psychiatry, this could be disastrous.

Moreover, the CNRU acts as an important buffer of clinical load in New Haven. **Often there are a lot more patients in the emergency rooms who are deemed to require inpatient hospitalization than there are psychiatric beds in New Haven. In these situations, the CNRU is acts as an important relief valve** as we are able to admit non-research patients when the unit is not filled to capacity with research patients alone (which is often the case). With funding cuts that would jeopardize the resident staffing on the unit, we might be unable to fulfill this essential function. **The already severe bed shortage would consequently be worsened further. Ultimately, this will lead to more severely mentally disturbed patients found on the streets of New Haven** instead of receiving the treatment they require, endangering both themselves and their communities.

For all of the above reasons, I urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts in CMHC's budget.